

COUNTRY HOUSE PIAZZAS

A NATIONAL DETAIL OF OUR COUNTRY ARCHITECTURE.

The Room in the Air—its Place in the Design of the House It Should Not Obtrude—Old Southern Porches—Correct Uses of the Various Styles.

The piazza may be fairly accounted a peculiarity of the American country house. It is rarely seen on houses built in European country towns. There the piazza has never been needed, because the dwellers in a house who desire to get out of doors prefer the sky over their heads. Occasionally one encounters in the Low Countries a species of piazza built into the house. But the American piazza in all its grandeur, stock on some side of the house with all the appropriateness to the design that a thumb wrapped in a cloth may bear to the healthy hand, is rarely encountered there. It is difficult in fact to realize what would happen in any foreign community should a so-called American piazza in all its aggressive unshapeliness suddenly grow on the end of a country house.

In spite of its strongly national character American architects have been expressing disfavor of this detail during the last few years. They will tell you that it darkens rooms, that it is necessary a very costly detail of any country house and that it is really very much better for people who want to be in the air to drag



Wilson Eyre, Architect. STUCCO HOUSE AT SHORT HILLS WITH PIAZZA PART OF THE PLAN.

place than Charleston, for although it is beautiful there it strikes a genuinely characteristic note. It takes, however, only a careful study of these old homes to see that even the artistic conscience of the architect or builder or owner occasionally asserted itself. He would run the roof out over the galleries, as they called them there, in order to make these wide porches seem an integral part of the house.

Of course the utility of such a piazza is to enjoy the open air in a hot town like Charleston, where a great deal. But the obvious imprudence of

at which the piazza has mercifully ceased? Then they can step to the window, or even without that previous formality enjoy something like daylight. But in all probability this one room in the house will be the only one in which it is possible to see with ease.

These dear old comprehensive piazzas in the Queen Anne style, however, were not built at that time for any other purpose. The tin roof could take in the summer sun until it became so hot that even the most hardy could not prevent its waves of heat from

In a smaller house, on the other hand, such an obvious addition would be inadvisable. In the case of the Short Hills house the question of the piazza is very delicate, fully admitted, so is the open room at one end of the Long Island house, which does not destroy in the least the symmetry of the building, although it shows every practical purpose of a piazza. The Bernardsville house offers a very interesting solution of the combination of a piazza and terrace. If it might be thought that the piazza appears to be an addition to the house it might be considered as a part of the house to



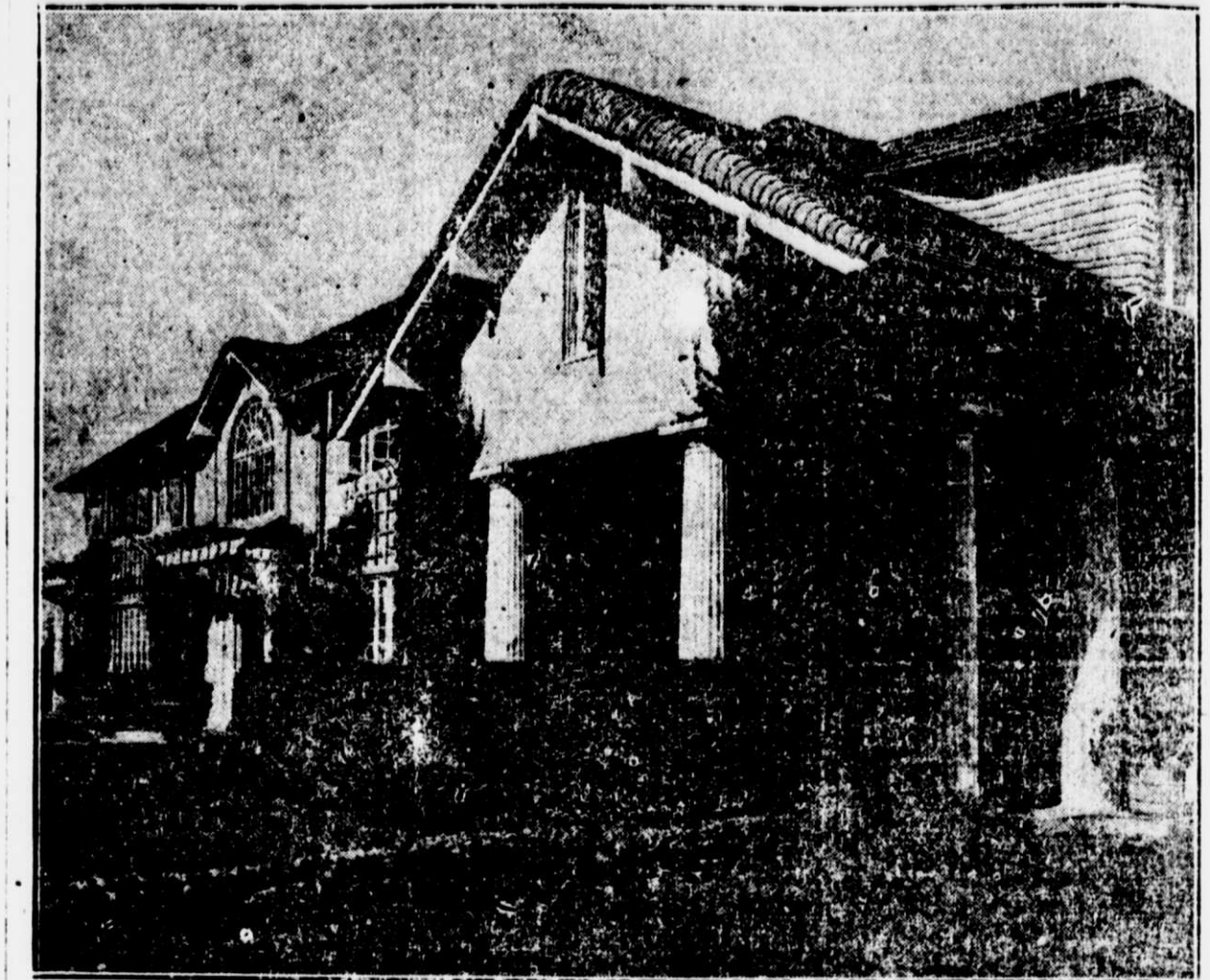
Lord & Hewlett, Architects. STONE PIAZZAS ON A NEW LONDON VILLA.

a chair out under a tree and sit there. Whether or not these views will have any effect on home builders in the future it is not possible to say. But it seems already true that they

favor most the piazza when it seems an essential part of the house. That is to say what might be a room or a part of the house opened to the air and yet seem a symmetrical portion of the building is



Avimar Embury 2d, Architect. WOOD AND STONE PIAZZA WITH THE PILLARS TO MATCH THE STONE IN THE PIAZZA.



Albro & Lindeberg, Architects. LONG ISLAND HOUSE WITH PIAZZA AS A PART OF THE STRUCTURAL PLAN.

subordinating a whole architectural scheme to them could not fail to impress itself on some sensitive artistic souls; so they tried to make their porches seem a part of their houses.

In the North the piazza, where it is not nearly so much needed, did not grow so rapidly into favor. The traditional piazza added to the small American home used to be only wide enough to let a string of occupants settle on it like wet sparrows on a telegraph wire. Then occasionally the line of the roof extending over a brick floor provided piazza enough for the needs of this earlier time. It

warning the rooms which opened on it. The advantage to burglars afforded by the facility with which they could climb up the pillars was probably unintentional in most cases. It was merely an accidental advantage of the dear old Victorian piazza.

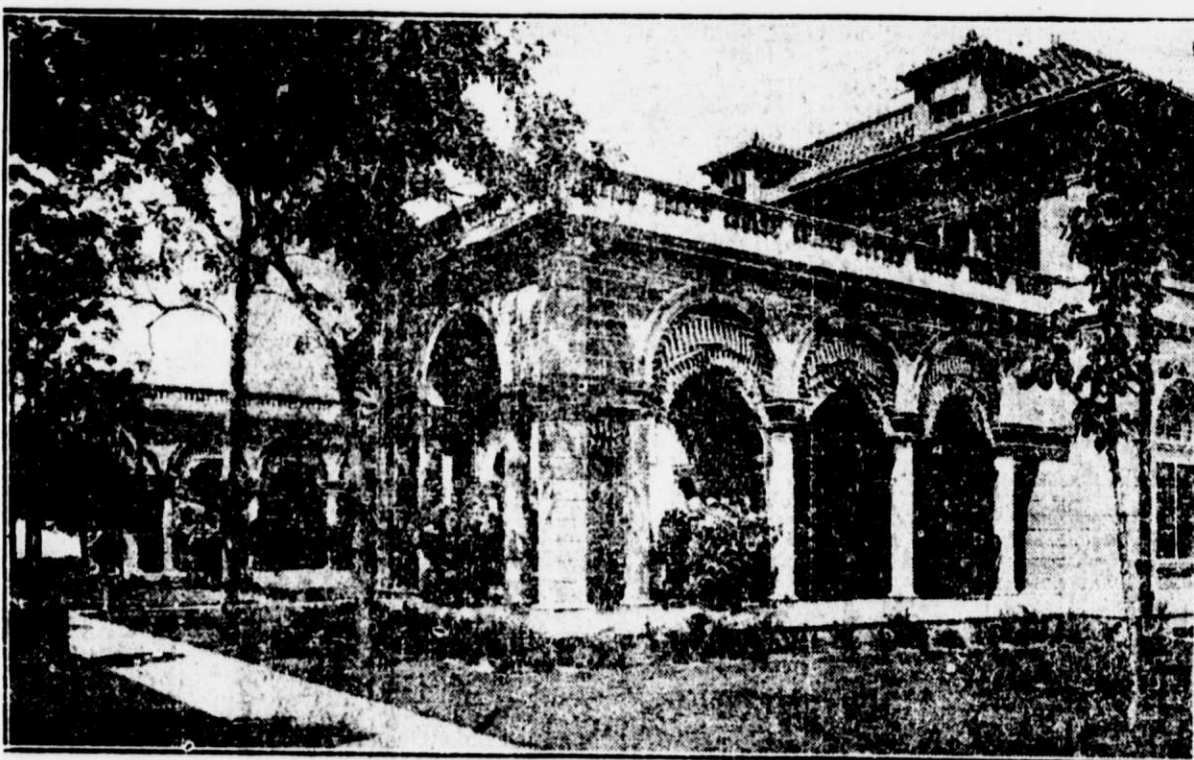
It is doubtful if this style is frequently built nowadays except in very formal country houses. Here the piazza, such as the one shown in the picture of the New London villa, is a part of the formal life of such a house. It extends away from the house, but its adherence to the general style relieves it from the criticism of not seeming an actual part of the house.

which it is, in fact, quite indispensable. The terrace was the European prototype of the piazza. It is both are common.

Architects agree that the piazza now is most artistic as a decorative feature of the house when it no longer seems an obtrusive element of the design. It must be an integral part of it. The old Southern houses with their spacious galleries are not a prototype to be followed today. They were built for a particular climate and a particular life. The piazza is most successful today when it offers the maximum amount of open air and out of door life and makes the least possible display of its purpose.



Avimar Embury 2d, Architect. PIAZZA WITH PERGOLA ROOF AND CORNERS TURNED.



Lord & Hewlett, Architects. VILLA AT NEW LONDON WITH ELABORATE PIAZZAS SERVING AS COURTS.

the type of piazza that the most sophisticated owners of their own homes are beginning to ask the architects for. This sort of a porch is not nearly so new as it seems.

Some of the earlier Colonial homes show the style of piazza which was in reality a part of the house. The low sloping roof supported by the white columns and forming a piazza six or eight inches wide because the facade of the house is kept back that far from the line of the cornice is a detail of American Colonial architecture that may even be observed at Mount Vernon. This same piazza covered by the roof and in this way made to appear an essential part

of the house was used in some of the early Dutch Colonial houses as well.

The Charleston houses stand of course in a class by themselves. The broad galleries built about the sleeping rooms, and for that matter all the rooms of the house, are a characteristic of domestic architecture in no other city of this country. Old inhabitants who dwell in the picturesque homes of that town could enjoy the advantage of every breeze that blew. These homes were of course such a legitimate product of natural conditions as all such marked types of architecture must be if they are to be in the least convincing. Nobody could recommend this style of home for any other

was in the late '70s that the piazza began to attain the abnormal size that it possesses in so many country towns.

It shot from all sides of the Victorian house. It followed the lines of the most picturesque Queen Anne structure with such fidelity that not a curve or an angle in the imaginative architect's plans could escape the piazza. Usually it would have a roof on it, which sometimes served as a balcony for the second story. This was not its principal purpose, however. The main object of the roof was to make the drawing room and the dining room as dark as possible. Who had not seen occupants of these houses walk through one or two rooms until they found a point



Wilson Eyre, Architect. PIAZZA AS PART OF THE ENTRANCE TO A NEW JERSEY HOME.

ITALIANS IN REAL ESTATE

SHREWD INVESTORS, USED TO COOPERATIVE BUYING.

Own 25 Per Cent. of the Tenements in Which Their Countrymen Live. None but Italian Shopkeepers Can Do Any Business in the Italian Colonies.

It is estimated that the Italian population of New York is anywhere from 350,000 to 500,000. Probably 80 per cent. of this number has come since 1895. Before that year immigration from Italy was slight. Down to 1890 the Italian immigration remained unimportant, but in the next five years it displaced the Irish and the German in numerical rank. In 1901 upward of 137,000 Italians came to this port and last year some 223,000.

Of course not all of these settled in New York, but it is said that of every shipload about 30 per cent. remained here. In any event the Italian has invaded practically every tenement section in the city.

South of Fourteenth street Italians predominate in three extensive settlements which in the last fifteen years ago were tenanted by Irish and Germans. From Elm street east to the river and from Houston street south to Brooklyn Bridge the Italian has displaced almost entirely every other nationality but the Jewish.

About thirty years ago this was one

of the most populous Irish and German quarters in the city. The first street there to be preempted was Mulberry street. Elizabeth street was next invaded, then Hester, Baxter, Park and in turn every street as far north as Houston street was annexed.

In 1890 the Mulberry Bend section was the only Italian settlement of any consequence in the city. It was bounded on the east by the Bowery, on the west by Elm street, on the south by James and Roosevelt streets and on the north by Houston street. Every Italian that landed here then sought a home in the Mulberry Bend colony. Here were his relatives and friends and here naturally he wanted to live. It was like the old country in every way but one, the buildings were taller.

In time Mulberry Bend could hold no more. The Italian population began to overflow into the territory eastward between Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges. Oak street was the first street here to be settled. It crossed both James and Roosevelt streets, which were Italian streets. Oliver street came next, and then Catherine. It is only ten years since the Italian got his foothold in Catherine street, yet the street is completely transformed. With few exceptions every house there south of Madison street is now entirely tenanted by Italians, and the shopkeepers who were there when Brooks Bros. had their store at the corner of Cherry and Catherine streets have all been displaced by Italians. Even the billboard posters,

the advertising signs in the shops and the moving picture legends are in Italian.

The Italians are a most clamorous race. They live as near to friends as possible and patronize Italian shops to the exclusion of others. A peculiarity of the Italian colonies is that entire streets, if not sections, are occupied by people from the same province or city. One will rarely find a Sicilian living or trading in any but a Sicilian settlement. Differences of dialect count for much no doubt in the distribution of the Italians here.

A very recent Italian conquest is the Cherry Hill section. Italians probably outnumber the other nationalities here. The Jews invaded the "Hill," only to retire through fear of the stalwart defenders entrenched in the section. The Italian, however, was not to be intimidated by the native roughs.

On the West Side, down near the Battery, there is also an Italian colony, probably the smallest in Manhattan. In Houston street are Italians all the way across from Chrystie to Hirsch street. It was by way of Houston street that the Italian entered Greenwich Village. Ten years ago the village had fewer Italians than any other colony. Carmine street was the first street to be invaded, and No. 63 the first house. The house up to that time had been occupied by a rough class of tenants, out of whom the owner, an old Yankee, could get little of the rent due him. He was afraid of them, and after a while he put the management of the house in the hands of a lawyer, but the lawyer could do nothing with the property either.

D. M. Gallo, president of the Gallo Realty Company, happened to be in

this lawyer's office one day about ten years ago. Mr. Gallo was a practical real estate man, and the lawyer who had just received a number of complaints about the houses asked Mr. Gallo to take charge of it. Mr. Gallo declined, but said he would lease it if he could get it for a long term. Mr. Gallo's offer was accepted without much parley. He lost no time in disposing of the old tenants and in putting in Italians. This was the beginning of the colony in the old Ninth ward. The colony is now an extensive one, and almost every street south of Tenth street is Italian.

The West Side has not as many Italians as the East Side. The only colony of any size there north of Greenwich Village is between Sixty-seventh and Seventieth streets, west of West End avenue.

On the East Side, starting at Houston street, colony after colony succeeded each other up to Little Italy, which promises to be soon the largest in the city. If it does not already hold that rank, it begins at 102d street and extends to 117th from Third avenue to the East River. In all there are about 1,000 houses in this section owned by Italians. The Harlem colony has grown up in the last fifteen years, and has now been dividing honors with Mulberry Bend for five years.

Most of the Italians in New York are from southern Italy. Last year of 223,433 Italian immigrants 192,973 came from the southern provinces. In 1901 northern Italy sent 22,103, as against 115,704 from southern Italy.

The Italian is regarded as a most desirable tenant; he invariably pays his rent and taxes promptly. The cooperative idea, exemplified in Italy by many flourishing agricultural and industrial associations, is expressed here in a variety of ways. It is common to find two or three

families living in a flat, each occupying without intrusion its allotted space. Being frugal and thrifty and accustomed to sharing with others in business enterprises, the Italian very soon acquires an interest in real estate. Probably about 25 per cent. of the property in the Italian colonies is owned by Italians.

It was said in 1905 that the Italians in this city owned \$15,000,000 worth of property and had about \$15,000,000 in savings banks. No doubt both these figures have been greatly increased in the last six years.

Some years ago the Italian did more leasing than buying, being lured on with the former mode of investing in Italy. Of late years the reverse is the case. The change was brought about by the real estate boom which followed the Spanish-American war.

Values in every section went up, and owners became less inclined to tie up their holdings with leases. Besides the Italian was not slow to realize the advantages of freshhold investments. With this knowledge Italians have given up leasing almost entirely in favor of buying real estate.

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE.

A Globe Trotter Says Europe Thinks We Have Done Something.

Joseph Pennell delivered an address recently before the members of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in which he is reported to have said:

"Right here in Philadelphia you have some of the very finest things in the world, and in many ways your city is the most artistic in the world. Only you

don't seem to know it or you would take better care of your fine old buildings. Each time I come back here I find that some of the very good ones have gone since my last visit, and at the present rate there will be none left at all after a few more years. It is a crime, for Philadelphia possesses some veritable treasures in the way of Colonial buildings.

"You in America don't seem to appreciate what you have all over your country, for instance there is nothing in the world to equal the view as you come up the New York harbor. It is superb. I got up just before sunrise and climbed up on the deck of the Oceanic as she lay at Quarantine, and I tell you the sight I beheld of New York harbor in the sunrise was one of the most beautiful and inspiring I ever set my eyes upon, and I have travelled very extensively.

"The artists of Europe feel that you in America have done something real and great. They feel that you, as a people, are following out your traditions, though you appear to be unconscious of it. Those great 'skyscrapers,' as the French call them, are indicative of a fine solid achievement in architecture, and they are the natural growth out of your traditions and necessities. They are not in any sense imitative of anything, and you ought to be proud of them and of your great cities.

"There is altogether too much of this talk about the art and architecture and beauty in the countries of Europe. There is plenty of all these in the United States, and a heap of them right in Philadelphia; but it seems that you must get away from

the city for a space before you know what you have here at home.

"And above all you should preserve your traditions, the traditions of America and America alone, and develop upon them as a basis rather than go back to the past and drag out here on this continent some imitation of a distant style and age.

"You are not growing old as they already have on the other side, and the first thing about you is your youthfulness and magnificent virility. Only you need to live elsewhere for a while in order to come back and appreciate for the first time what beautiful things you have here."

Central Heating Stations.

An innovation in appliances for heating the public school buildings of the District of Columbia is to be made during the next few months, when a central heating plant for the use of three of the city's largest public schools is to be installed. This is the construction of the plant were opened under the supervision of Snowden Ashford, municipal architect, on Tuesday of this week.

The central heating plant idea has been given trials in other cities, it is said, and has proved a success. The idea, although not previously applied to school buildings, has been tested in Washington on a large scale. The Capitol, Library, House and Senate office buildings are heated by a plant located in 17th street, southwest. The plant has been in operation several months, and with the exception of one short period a few weeks ago has proved satisfactory and has resulted in the saving of much money to the Government. In New York the idea is working successfully in a number of cases, as in the case of apartment houses. In a small number of third class cities electric light companies furnish heat to dwellings. Record and Guide.